



News Release

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Service Begins Scoping Period for the Southern Edwards Plateau Regional Habitat Conservation Planning Process

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced today in the *Federal Register* a Notice of Intent (NOI) to begin drafting an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate the proposed issuance of an incidental take permit for the Southern Edwards Plateau draft Regional Habitat Conservation Plan (dRHCP).

Led by the City of San Antonio, TX, and Bexar County, TX, the Southern Edwards Plateau Regional Habitat Conservation Plan is an effort to address the potential impacts of infrastructure and commercial and residential development and seeks incidental take authorization. The proposed planning area covers Bexar County, TX, and six surrounding counties.

At this time, five listed species are proposed for inclusion in the draft RHCP, and include: the golden-cheeked warbler (*Dendroica chrysoparia*), black-capped vireo (*Vireo atricapilla*), Madla Cave meshweaver (*Cicurina madla*), and two ground beetle species, each of which has no common name (*Rhadine exilis* and *Rhadine infernalis*). If the permit is approved, the Service would authorize the incidental take of these five federally listed species for a period of 30 years.

Written comments on alternatives and issues to be addressed in the draft EIS must be received by July 26, 2011. Public scoping meetings will be held at various locations throughout the proposed seven-county plan area between May 1, 2011 and June 15, 2011. Exact meeting locations and times will be announced in local newspapers and on the Service's Austin Ecological Services Office website, <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/AustinTexas>, at least 2 weeks prior to each meeting. For further information on how to obtain or review copies of these documents, or how to provide comments, see the *Federal Register* notice at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/index.html>.

America's fish, wildlife and plant resources belong to all of us, and ensuring the health of imperiled species is a shared responsibility. The Service is actively engaged with conservation partners and the public in the search for improved and innovative ways to conserve and recover imperiled species. To learn more about the Endangered Species program, go to <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/>.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works cooperatively with the American public to continue the conservation legacy of America's great outdoors. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/>